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Congress Takes Steps To Reduce Unemployment Rate

Immediate action to relieve the nation's unemployed with Blacks suffering more than three times as much as whites was begun in Washington with both Presidential and congressional endorsement of large amounts of funds for public service jobs.

The House Democrats asked for a $5.9-billion appropriation to create the public service jobs, and President Ford announced that he will ask Congress for more than $2 billion to continue the funding of public service and summer jobs.

Mayors of major cities, including Los Angeles' Tom Bradley, Newark, N. J.'s Kenneth Gibson and Washington, D. C.'s Walter Washington, lobbied on Capitol Hill for passage of appropriation bills for more public service jobs, especially summer jobs for youth from poor families. Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Ind., charged that "the riots have already begun, but in a different form from the 60s. The crime rate has increased and the welfare rolls have increased substantially."

Meanwhile, Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D., Calif.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities, opened hearings on a proposed Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Bill, and the nation's leading economists testified regarding a permanent full employment program. Rep. Hawkins, Rep. Henry S. Seuss (D., Wis.) and 83 other congressmen cosponsored the Full Employment Bill in the House while Minnesota Sen. Hubert Humphrey sponsored a similar bill in the Senate.

Distinguished Black Legal Panel Attempts To Expose Misconduct In The Federal Government

Calling itself "the Supreme Court of final appeal," a distinguished panel of Black lawyers, lawmakers and social activists has been organized for the purpose of exposing and documenting instances of alleged government misconduct relating to the treatment of Blacks in the criminal justice system.

Chairman of the ad hoc panel is Rep. John Conyers (D., Mich.) who presently sits as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime. Other congressional members are Rep. Ron Dellums (D., Calif.) and Del. Walter Fauntroy (D., D. C.).

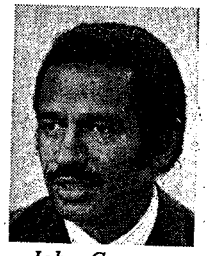
Among the other nine panel members are New York City Criminal Court Judge William Booth, educators Dr. Vincent Harding and Dr. Ronald Walters, Mississippi civil rights leader Dr. Aaron Henry and Dr. Charles Cobb, president of the National Committee of Black Churchmen.

The first of a series of public hearings was recently convened in Washington. Here, focus was given to New York's Attica prison riot of 1971, the North Carolina criminal case of the "Wilmington 10," and the Republic of New Africa's altercation with Mississippi police, and well-publicized racial confrontations which occurred in 1971. Conyers said the purpose of the hearings is to swell public concern for such alleged racially discriminatory abuses, but more importantly, to amass information that will be used to urge House and Senate committees investigating the CIA and FBI to probe these agencies' practices involving Black activist groups and individuals.

Said Dellums, a member of the House committee investigating the domestic spying activities of the CIA: "What this hearing is about is to document governmental lawlessness."

After more than four hours of testimony from lawyers and participants involved in the three celebrated cases, there emerged no damaging charges implicating either the CIA or FBI in any of these specific occurrences. What did emerge were lengthy citations of alleged legal abuses on the parts of the prosecutors and judges during the course of criminal litigation, all said to be racially motivated.

Rev. Ben Chavis, one of 10 convicted defendants involved in the Wilmington, N. C., murder conspiracy case, told the panel that trial defense lawyers documented close to 3,000 technical prosecutorial errors that were later included in an appellate brief seeking reversal of the jury ruling.



John Conyers

Ronald Dellums

Walter Fauntroy

Aaron Henry

Amiri Abubakari Obadele I, president of the Republic of New Africa told of alleged police and judicial irregularities in the early morning Jackson, Miss., shootout between RNA members and police that led to his criminal conviction.

Noting that these cases occurred in 1971, during the height of the Nixon Administration's so-called law-and-order campaign, Chavis said, "It is apparent that during the Nixon Administration they tried to drive Black people out of this country."

Criminal prosecutions against Blacks resulted in all three cases resulting in convictions of charges ranging from first-degree murder to conspiracy.

The panel's first hearing was held at Washington's All Souls' Unitarian Church.

A second hearing, said Conyers, is planned for Jackson, Miss., later this month.